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To: The Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly

From: Kim Yannon, Music Educator, Cheshire Public Schools
President-Elect, Connecticut music Educators Association

This is my 25th year teaching choral and general music in the state of Connecticut. My first degree was not in music education, but in Flute Performance at Western Connecticut State University. The training for that degree consisted of performing group participation, music history, theory and analysis classes, private lessons and coaching. Everything about that training prepared me for a career in music performance. It may have also been adequate training for continuing as a coach for private students or groups of students in master classes. It in no way prepared me for what I do now: teach choral and general music to students from 2nd through 8th grade, with varying degrees of aptitude and ability (that is after I have identified their levels of aptitude and ability through ongoing formal and informal assessment), adjust and accommodate for students with physical, intellectual and learning disabilities, choose age appropriate and content sequenced literature and activities for my performing groups and classes, participate in the development, evaluation and revision of our town's curriculum based on my knowledge and understanding of National and State Standards and as we are doing now in Cheshire, develop district-wide assessments, collect data and benchmark student performance to further inform instruction and student learning. Nothing in my early training prepared me for this, nor would a lifetime of performance experiences. These are the activities which occupy most of my day as an arts educator as opposed to an artist. The training I received during my years working towards a Master of Science degree in Music Education and now in my work towards a PhD in Music Education and Pedagogy in the areas of methodology, child development, teaching students with special needs and curriculum development and assessment is crucial to my effectiveness as an educator. My ability to perfectly and meaningfully execute Bolling's second Jazz Suite for Flute does indeed contribute to my overall musical sensibility and modeling capabilities in the classroom, but does not contribute in a great way to my ability to teach music to children.

One of our goals as a body of arts educators is to insure that all children, regardless of aptitude, ability and socio-economic status have access to quality arts programs in schools. Increasing access in urban areas may be the impetus and the rationale behind allowing artists to do the job of teachers in our schools. However, access is only one part of the equation. The other part is insuring that all students have the opportunity to be successful in the arts. This can only be accomplished through teaching and by staffing our schools with the highest quality arts educators. This is the charge of our current arts teacher preparation programs and our current state teacher evaluation program. Bypassing and, subsequently, undermining these programs by allowing non-educators to teach children would be a short sighted and counter-productive move by this body.

I urge you to oppose House Bill 6666 and continue to support arts education delivered only by highly trained, qualified arts educators.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Yannon

Choral/general music educator, Cheshire Public Schools

President-Elect, Connecticut Music Educators Association